

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OC-06

CCO-00 OMB-01 PC-01 AID-05 IO-13 ACDA-07 SAM-01

SCCT-01 /102 W

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R 231310Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4068

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0586

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MOPS ET

SUBJECT: TROOPS OF THE FLAME DIVISION ARRIVE IN ASMARA

REF: ASMARA 0579 (DTG 230635Z JUL 76) AND PREVIOUS

1. ON JULY 22 SEVERAL SOURCES REPORTED THE ARRIVAL IN ASMARA OF TROOPS OF THE NEWLY-ORGANIZED "FLAME" DIVISION. ON THAT DAY, A DC-6 WAS SUBSTITUTED FOR THE NORMAL 720-B ON THE SCHEDULED EAL FLIGHT, AND IT IS REPORTED THAT THE 720-B MADE TWO ROUND-TRIPS TO ASMARA TRANSPORTING SOLDIERS OF THE FLAME DIVISION. FOUR TRUCKLOADS OF THESE TROOPS WERE SEEN DRIVING TOWARD THE CENTER OF TOWN SHORTLY AFTER NOON. THE TROOPS, WHO HAD NEW M-14
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RIFLES AND NEWLY-ISSUED UNIFORMS, WERE ESCORTING A TRUCK FULL

OF WOMEN THOUGHT TO BE OFFICERS' WIVES. THESE TROOPS WERE OBSERVED AT 1700 HEADED OUT THE KEREN ROAD.

2. MOST OF THE ESTIMATED 400 FLAME DIV. TROOPS WERE FERRIED DIRECTLY FROM THE ASMARA AIRPORT BY DC-3 TO KEREN. AS REPORTED REFTEL, THE FIGHTING IN THE KEREN AREA IS REPORTEDLY VERY INTENSE AND REINFORCEMENTS ARE BADLY NEEDED.

3. COMMENT: IT IS PERHAPS VERY FORTUITOUS THAT THERE IS A GENUINE REQUIREMENT FOR NEWLY TRAINED AND INDOCTRINATED ETHIOPIAN TROOPS TO BE SENT TO ERITREA AT A TIME WHEN THE LOYALTY AND MORALE OF TROOPS LONG-STATIONED HERE IS QUESTIONABLE. MOREOVER, ELEMENTS OF THE FLAME DIV., ALLEGED TO BE FIRM SUPPORTERS OF THE DIRG, ARRIVE IN ERITREA JUST AS THE UNRELIABLE PARACHUTE BN. IS SENT FROM ASMARA TO THE MORE ISOLATED ADI UGRI (THERE IS NO AIRFIELD THERE). WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF, AFTER THE KEREN FLARE-UP IS EXTINGUISHED, THE FLAME DIV. TROOPS RETURN TO ASMARA AND ARE SOON JOINED BY OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE DIVISION.
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Message Attributes

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